

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Please **CANCEL** claims 2 and 13-30; and

Please **AMEND** claims 1, 3 and 5 as follows.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for reducing resist poisoning, comprising the steps of:

forming a first structure in a dielectric on a substrate;

reducing amine related contaminants from the dielectric and the substrate prior to a formation of a second structure on the substrate such that the amine related contaminants will not diffuse out from either the substrate or the dielectric, wherein the reducing utilizes a plasma treatment which one of chemically ties up the amine related contaminants and binds, traps, or consumes the amine related contaminants during subsequent processing steps;

forming the second structure on the substrate; and

after the forming of the first structure, preventing poisoning of a resist layer in subsequent processing by the reducing,

wherein the reducing step includes providing an N₂O plasma wafer treatment to the dielectric and the substrate.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[2]] 1, wherein the N₂O plasma wafer treatment is performed at approximately 400 degrees Celsius.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the N₂O plasma treatment chemically binds, traps or consumes the contaminants such that the contaminants will

not diffuse out from either the substrate or the dielectric during the formation of the second structure.

5. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) The method of claim [[2]] 1, wherein the reducing step includes a wet etching of approximately 30 seconds at 25 degrees Celsius 100:1 ratio of DHF (dilute hydrofluoric acid).

6. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 5, wherein the reducing step further includes the steps of:

- coating the substrate and the dielectric with organic antireflective coating film (ARC);

- baking at approximately 100 degrees Celsius to 250 degrees Celsius the ARC to remove amine based contaminants; and

- removing the ARC by dry stripping or plasma etching.

7. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 8, wherein the ARC is exposed to UV light.

8. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the reducing step further includes the steps of:

- coating the substrate and the dielectric with an organic antireflective coating film (ARC);

- baking the ARC at approximately 100 degrees Celsius to 250 degrees Celsius to remove amine based contaminants; and

- removing the ARC.

9. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of depositing a plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition (PECVD) oxide cap after removal of the ARC.

10. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 9, wherein the oxide cap is approximately 25 nm.

11. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 9, wherein prior to the deposition of the oxide cap, an annealing process is performed at about 400 degrees Celsius for about 60 seconds.

12. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 11, prior to the deposition of the oxide layer, a N₂O or O₂ plasma etch at an approximate temperature of 400 degrees Celsius is performed.

Claims 13-34 (Canceled).

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the forming the second structure on the substrate is substantially devoid of amine related contaminants.